

PROCEEDINGS  
OF THE  
BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

A NEW VOLE FROM MONTAGUE ISLAND, ALASKA.

BY WILFRED H. OSGOOD.

During a short time spent on Montague Island, Alaska, in the spring of 1905, Mr. Charles Sheldon, although chiefly interested in large bears, found time to "bother with mouse traps." As a result of this interest in small mammals as well as large, seven specimens of a vole and two of a shrew, prepared and presented by Mr. Sheldon, are now in the Biological Survey Collection. The shrews appear to be indistinguishable from the species of the adjacent mainland coast (*Sorex obscurus alascensis*), but the voles differ so widely as to require a new name. For the privilege of describing this new form, I am indebted to Dr. C. Hart Merriam, Chief of the Biological Survey.

*Microtus elymocetes*\* sp. nov.

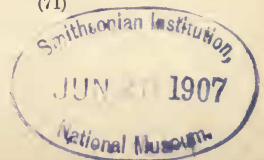
*Type* from the east side of Montague Island, Prince William Sound, Alaska. No. 137,323, U. S. National Museum, Biological Survey Collection. ♂ adult. May 12, 1905. C. Sheldon.

*Characters*.—Size very large, only equalled among the Alaskan members of the "*operarius* group" by *M. innuitus* of St. Lawrence Island; color most nearly like that of *M. yakutatensis* but underparts even more strongly suffused with brownish; feet dusky brownish instead of gray; skull large and heavy with zygomata strongly notched anteriorly.

*Color*.—Similar in general to that of *operarius*, *unalascensis*, and *kadiacensis*, but slightly darker with entire underparts heavily washed with buffy; upperparts cinnamon to clay color uniformly mixed with dusky, producing a general effect of raw umber; sides, face, and head essentially like back; underparts clay color, sometimes paling to grayish in pectoral and inguinal regions; forefeet dusky brownish, edged with whitish gray; hind feet grayish white proximally, dusky brownish distally; toes dusky brownish; tail sharply bicolor, dusky brownish above, whitish gray below.

*Skull*.—General characters as in *operarius*, *unalascensis*, and *yakutatensis*, but size very much larger; zygomata more deeply notched anteriorly; size

\**Elymocetes*, from *Elymus*, the generic name of the wild rye or beach grass often inhabited by this mouse and its relatives.



about as in *M. innuitus*; braincase narrower; rostrum shorter; width across lacrymal processes of frontal greater; audital bullae relatively smaller; upper incisors less projecting anteriorly.

*Measurements.*—The type and two topotypes, respectively: Total length, 201; 191; 180; tail vertebrae, 40; 40; 35; hind foot (dry), 23.5; 23; 22. Skull of type: Basal length, 31.1; basilar length, 29.2; postpalatilar length, 12.1; zygomatic width, 18.6; mastoid width, 13.8; length of nasals, 9.2; interorbital constriction, 3.9; maxillary toothrow, 7.4.

*Remarks.*—This insular form differs from its mainland relatives chiefly in decidedly larger size. It belongs to the so-called "*operarius* group" which properly includes, besides a number of Alaskan forms, several of wide distribution in Eurasia. Representatives of this group doubtless entered Alaska from Asia at a time not very remote, for although a number of Alaskan forms are now differentiated, all are very closely allied and none show any marked departure from the Asiatic forms. The one here described seems as worthy of specific rank as any of the others but the amount of cranial variation in all the forms and the general uniformity of coloration leads one to believe that they might well be ranked as subspecies. If this were done, however, *M. oeconomus*, *M. kamschaticus*, and probably *M. ratticeps* ought to be included as they differ from *M. operarius* and other Alaskan forms only very slightly.



SKULLS OF *Microtus operarius* GROUP.

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| 99,373— <i>M. innuitus</i> . Type.     | 98,991— <i>M. operarius</i> . Topotype.     |
| 98,005— <i>M. yakutatensis</i> . Type. | 107,472— <i>M. unalascensis</i> . Topotype. |
| 137,323— <i>M. elymocetes</i> . Type.  |   |